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# WELCOME TO THE HIGH COUNTRY!



The mountains of Colorado are among America's most beautiful and we hope you will enjoy every minute of your visit. But some of the very features which make the high country so attractive may cause problems unless you recognize their dangers and know how to prevent them.

As you go higher, barometric pressure decreases, the air is thinner and less oxygen is available. It's also colder and drier, and the ultraviolet rays from the sun are stronger. Each of these changes may have unpleasant effects on your body...

There is great personal joy, beauty, and inner peace to be discovered in the mountains. Treat yourself with respect and enjoy your visit.





## ALTITUDE

You may notice that your breathing is faster or deeper and you may feel short of breath, especially when you exercise. This is the body's first and most effective response to altitude. Your heart is likely to beat faster also; this too is a helpful, normal reaction.

However, you may also develop a headache, slight nausea, or unusual tiredness; some people even have trouble sleeping. Depending on the altitude, 20% to 30% of all visitors from near sea level have one or several of these symptoms. We call this acute mountain sickness or AMS. Children are more susceptible than adults.

**MILD SYMPTOMS:** Headache, nausea, poor appetite, run-down feeling, shortness of breath with exertion. If symptoms remain after a day or two, grow worse, or worry you, consult a doctor. If you develop a worsening cough, increasing shortness of breath or feel like you have fluid in your lungs, **see a doctor at once!**

**BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME,** you can do a few things to decrease the effects of altitude. Spending two nights at a modest altitude decreases symptoms when you go higher. Eat foods which are high in carbohydrates, drink more water, take less salt and avoid alcoholic beverages.

**ONCE YOU ARRIVE,** take it easy for the first day or two. Reduce alcohol, caffeine, and salty foods. Drink more water than usual. Salt causes your body to retain fluid (edema) which increases the severity of altitude illness.

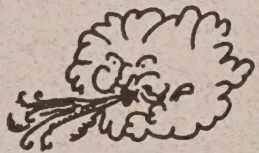


**LISTEN TO YOUR BODY!** Altitude illness feels very much like flu or a hangover, but is much more serious. Don't push. **IF YOU FEEL WORSE AND WORSE, GET MEDICAL HELP!** Minor altitude symptoms occasionally become life-threatening. Don't let ignorance or carelessness spoil your stay!

### ACCLIMATION TIPS

- Increase Fluid Intake
- Decrease Salt Intake
- Moderate Your Physical Activity
- Select Higher Carbohydrate Foods
- Eat Low Fat Meals
- Reduce Alcohol and Caffeine
- Feeling Lousy? Seek Help!
- Have Fun!

### HYPOTHERMIA



Temperature falls about 3° F for every 1000 feet of altitude, and it can get cold very fast. Afternoon thundershowers are common in the mountains. Take rain gear and extra clothing *even* if it is a warm sunny day. Hypothermia (low body temp.) can occur even in the summer if you are wet, wind-chilled, hungry, tired, or poorly dressed. The warning signs are clumsiness, trouble thinking or talking clearly, irritability and confusion. Watch for these signs in others. If in doubt; stop, warm up, eat and drink. If necessary, send for help.

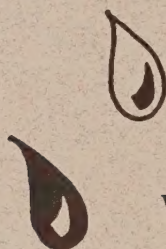


## SUNBURN

The sun has more power in the thin air, and a bad sunburn can spoil your stay. No matter how tanned you may be, use a protective cream.

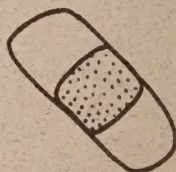


“Cold sores” are aggravated at high altitude but might be prevented by a medication which your doctor can prescribe. Sunburn of the eyes is a real danger, even on foggy or cloudy days. Wear sunglasses or goggles with ultraviolet protection.



## WATER

The crisp mountain air is exhilarating, but it's also very dry. You lose much more water than you realize in exhaled air and sweat. It's very important to maintain body fluids, so drink two or three times more than usual. Fill your canteen in the hotel. Don't drink from streams because of the risk of *Giardia* infection. Juices and water are better than tea, coffee or alcohol. At high altitude, one alcoholic drink does the work of two.

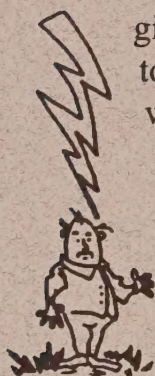


## INJURIES

Accidents can happen at anytime to anyone, but they are more common when you are cold, tired or hungry. Lack of oxygen can blunt your judgement, leading you to do foolish things. Whether hiking, skiing, playing golf or tennis,







give your body plenty of food and water to function efficiently. Don't keep going when you're very tired. Quit while you're ahead.

## LIGHTNING

Lightning kills nearly 100 people every year! Lightning occurs when particles of water, ice, and air moving inside storm clouds lose electrons. An electrical current snakes back and forth between the cloud and the ground many times in the seconds that we see a flash crackle down from the sky. Anything tall - a tower, a tree, or a person - becomes a path for electrical current.

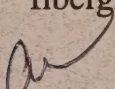
***ABOVE TIMBERLINE, YOU ARE THE TALLEST OBJECT!***

*Reaching the top isn't worth sacrificing your personal safety. There will always be another day!*

Traveling at speeds up to 300 miles per second, a lightning strike can hurl a person through the air. It can burn clothes off and can sometimes cause the heart to stop beating. The most severe lightning strikes carry up to 50 million volts of electricity, enough to serve 13,000 homes. Lightning can "flash" over a person's body vessels and nerves to reach the ground.

Use common sense during thunder storms. If you see a storm approaching in the distance, don't wait until you are soaked to seek shelter. If a thunderstorm threatens:

- Crouch with ankles and knees together in a low-lying area.
- Avoid wire fences, clotheslines, metal or fiberglass pipes and rails.







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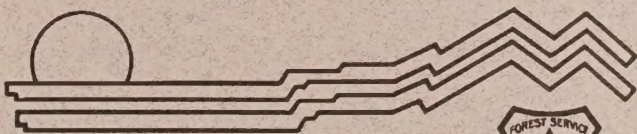
- Stay several yards apart if you are in a group.
- Take cover indoors if possible.
- Go inside a car and roll up the windows. Don't touch metal in car.
- Stop swimming or boating.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

The National Forest and Grasslands are public lands in joint ownership by all citizens; their management requires different laws and regulations based on local conditions. Please become familiar with restrictions by checking with local offices and reading signs and bulletin boards.

It is your responsibility to be aware of the potential risks and take safety precautions at all times when you visit National Forests and Grasslands. Changing terrain and weather conditions present a wide variety of hazards. Hazards include but are not limited to: landslides; caves; falling trees or rocks; high or rushing water; contaminated water; wild animals; severe weather; becoming lost or over-exerted; hypothermia; remnants of mining and other activities involving excavations; and exposure to unreasonable acts of other people.

If you have questions regarding the various hazards on the National Forest or Grassland, contact the District Office or Forest Supervisor's Office.



Pike and San Isabel National Forests  
Cimarron and Comanche  
National Grasslands



